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Letter dated 22 September 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the written statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by His Excellency Mr. Carlos Menem, President of Argentina, on 21 September 1999 in the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could arrange to have the text of the present letter and the annexed statement circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 9.

(*Signed*) Jeremy **Greenstock**

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Annex

Statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the President of Argentina in the general debate on 21 September 1999

The British Government shares the President of Argentina's satisfaction at the strengthening of relations between our two countries in the last year, reflected in his and the Prince of Wales' visits and culminating in July in the signing by British and Argentine delegations of an agreement on practical arrangements on access for Argentine citizens to the Falkland Islands, air links to South America and measures to enhance fisheries cooperation and to combat poaching of fish stocks. These measures represent an important advance in our bilateral relations and a milestone on the path of reconciliation.

There is, however, nothing in the agreement that compromises the position of the United Kingdom in relation to its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands: we have no doubt about Britain's sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and the other British dependencies in the South Atlantic.

The wishes of the people of the Falkland Islands must be heeded. The elected representatives of the Islanders expressed their views clearly when they visited the United Nations for this year's debate in the Committee of 24. They asked the Committee to recognize that they, like any other democratic people, were entitled to exercise the right of self-determination. They reiterated that the people of the Falkland Islands did not want to be part of Argentina.

This year's agreement, however, showed clearly that we in the United Kingdom and Argentina can manage our differences on sovereignty while making practical arrangements on matters of common interest in the South Atlantic. The British Government is confident that our relations will continue to flourish in that spirit of reconciliation, cooperation and mutual interest.